

REMARKS

A. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement due to the phrase “self-adjusting holding plate”, which was included in claim 1 and paragraph [0014] of the specification.

By the amendments made herein, the phrase has been removed from claim 1 thereby obviating its rejection and the rejection of depending claims 2-5, 8, and 9. Paragraph [0014] of the specification has been amended in accordance with the amendments to claim 1.

B. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Japanese Patent No. JP2002177895, issued to Masahiko (“Masahiko”).

At the suggestion of the Examiner, independent claim 1 is amended herein to include the following limitations: a vertical guide having “a substantially vertically-oriented elongated slot”; the first holding plate “slidably and pivotally engaging the elongated slot”; and “wherein said first holding plate is pivoted about said vertical guide to be placed in alignment with said cleaning cartridge.” Support for the amendments to claim 1 and related amendments to amended paragraph 14 of the specification is found in the following: 1) FIGS. 4A and 4C; and 2) paragraph 14 as amended herein – “In one embodiment, top holding plate 20 is pivotally and slidably joined with an elongated slot 31 that serves as a vertical guide. Elongated slot 31 is configured to guide top holding plate 20 from the open position shown in FIG. 4A to the closed position shown in FIG. 4C, which is proximate cleaning cartridge 40, by allowing it to slide and pivot within the elongated slot.

In contrast, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 5 of Masahiko, Masahiko relies on a *manual* dial and *threaded* screw to vertically adjust the probe pins, rather than a vertical guide that is configured to allow the top holding plate to pivot into alignment with the cleaning cartridge. Accordingly, Masahiko fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 1 as currently amended.

Therefore, claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. For at least the same reasons, the balance of the claims, which depend from claim 1, are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

C. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Masahiko as applied to claim 3. The Examiner also rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Masahiko in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,240,339, issued to DeForest et al.

Claim 1 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. For at least the same reasons, claims 4 and 5, which depend from claim 1, are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

D. Summary

In the present Office Action, claims 1-5, 8, and 9 were examined. Claims 1-5, 8, and 9 are rejected. Claim 1 is amended and claim 2 is canceled. Claims 1, 3-5, 8, and 9 are presented for consideration.

Based on the remarks above, Applicants submit that none of the references, alone or in combination, anticipates or makes obvious the invention as presently claimed and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and further examination of the application and the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance at the earliest possible date.

If the Examiner has any questions or believes that a discussion with Applicants' attorney would expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Please apply any credits or charge any deficiencies to our Deposit Account No. 23-1665.

Respectfully submitted,
William H. Fulton et al.

Date: March 20, 2008

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